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SUBJECT Justification of New Rules and Regulations for CIA

BOB EDWARDS: CIA Director Stansfield Turner charged today that new rules and regulations aimed at preventing CIA misconduct are hamstringing the agency. Turner made his remarks at the annual meeting of the American Bar Association in Dallas.

A report from NPR legal affairs correspondent Nina Totenberg.

NINA TOTENBERG: Turner conceded that past misconduct by the CIA justified some new rules and regulations, but he said this transition period is, in his words, traumatic. He said that, in many ways, increased public and press interest in the CIA has been damaging to the national security.

ADMIRAL STANSFIELD TURNER: If you are a CIA case officer overseas attempting to persuade a foreign person to spy on behalf of this country, perhaps at the risk of his or her life, you must have confidence that you can assure that person that his or her identity will not become public.

Today, while we do and can protect such information, the plethora of unauthorized leaks within our government has created a perception that we cannot hold necessary secrets. And this indeed has hurt our intelligence activities.

As a result, I have proposed a new criminal statute which would make it an offense to disclose the identity of undercover CIA persons or agents whose relationships with the Central Intelligence Agency are deliberately concealed.

TOTENBERG: Similar legislation has been proposed by past CIA Directors, but Congress, so far, has failed to act on